

cisive in influence, than the audible rhetoric of his sermons. Clerical affectations or assumptions can no longer deceive or awe the people. There must be in the pastor a simple transparent manliness sanctified by the love of Christ, and yet all the more intensely human because Christly. Once the minister was first and the man second, now the man is first or the minister has no place or power. In St. Paul's Epistle to Titus (1:7-9) there are thirteen virtues enjoined as conditioning the one thing—ability to preach as if to show that character is to pulpit power as thirteen to one.

Scholarly tastes and habits must be watched lest they disqualify for genial and effective converse with the common people. The scholarly must be qualified by the Christly, then the small courtesies which are of such value in the commerce of society, will not be neglected and love will make the pastor a gentle man, welcome to every household and heart. There is an old saying as trite as true, "A house going minister makes a church going people."

This intimate relation must necessarily exist or the scriptural idea lost sight of. I am the good shepherd, says Christ, the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But he that is a hireling and not the shepherd whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth and the wolf catches them and scattereth the sheep.

The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling and careth not for the sheep. It does seem to me altho I may be mistaken that many of the Brethren churches have not the right idea of the relation they sustain to the pastor. Instead of thinking that the pastor is their shepherd they look upon him too often as their hireling. Hired for a year and at the expiration of that time the pastor is no more under any obligations to his people and the congregation under no more obligations to their pastor.

Yearly pastorates I believe to be detrimental to both pastor and people and having a demoralizing tendency in general. A tree transplanted every year bears no fruit no matter how good the soil may be. Furthermore, these yearly pastorates keep the pastor in a state of uncertainty and the churches in a continual state of turmoil. The pastor has no assurance that he will have the charge, the church is at a loss to know as to whether they will have a pastor and it gives no encouragement to outsiders to unite with the church. Another serious objection to short pastorates is that a pastor can not become sufficiently acquainted in that length of time to do much pastoral work. It takes a year for a pastor to become acquainted with the needs and wants of the peo-

ple and get anything like an accurate knowledge of his work. More than that, it puts away with the scriptural idea of a shepherd who is to be the bishop of their souls. When James was ordained bishop of the church at Jerusalem, who would for a moment think that he was hired for a year. When Timothy was ordained bishop of the church of Ephesus, do you suppose he was hired for a year? When Titus was ordained bishop of the church of Crete, it would be far beneath the idea that we have of that day and age to think that he was hired for a year. Neither do I think that such an idea could be gathered from the Greek and Latin Fathers that to call a bishop was to hire him for a year.

My idea is that when a pastor is called to take charge of a church that he should be considered the shepherd of that flock until a very good reason arises for a change. These constant changes will disqualify both minister and people for effective work. This system has left many of our preachers without charges and many of our churches without pastors.

But we are met with the objection that if this system were in vogue, churches would have pastors whom they could not continue and it would make it very difficult to bring about a separation. For that very reason I am an uncompromising advocate of just such a system, for it would make churches more cautious in hiring their pastors. If that is the case, said the disciples, it is not good for a man to marry, after Jesus had taught them the sacredness of the marriage vow.

The popular idea that it is easy and respectable to obtain a divorce at any time is a great evil in our land and nation and has a tendency to make people plunge into the marriage state without thought or investigation. And what is true of the marriage relation is equally true of our churches and preachers. For I verily believe that the same intimate relation should exist between pastor and people that exists between husband and wife and that a divorce should not be granted for every cause.

This system that says that absolutely every member in the church must be satisfied or else a separation must take place between pastor and people is in my judgment altogether wrong.

I have been intimately associated with two churches of other denominations for five years and they impressed me along this line as never before. Twenty-five years ago one of these churches was considered weak and the other rather strong numerically. Now the church that was then considered weak, numbers three times as many members as the other church. The one grew in numbers very rapidly, the other is not

as strong now as it was twenty-five years ago.

What brought about this remarkable change, do you ask? I do not definitely know, but being located in the same town and having equal opportunities I am convinced that the change was largely due to their method of church work. The church that grew so rapidly has had the same pastor for twenty-five years, the other church has had twenty-two pastors in twenty-five years. I don't wonder that it is weak but I do wonder that there is anything left of it at all.

This one instance alone I know would not be sufficient evidence to justify us in changing a system that involves so much responsibility but I am fully convinced that long pastorates have a decided advantage over short pastorates, and the day has come when they are almost an absolute necessity or else have the regular itinerate system. But long pastorates have been tried for centuries and proven satisfactory and are not a novel invention. The Catholic priests generally stay a life time in the same parish. The German Baptist preachers generally preach to the same people all their days. The Presbyterian and Reformed ministers hardly ever change. And I am very much gratified to note that the Brethren church is recognizing also the advantages of long pastorates in many places but there are individual churches which have not yet learned this truth.

Let our churches stop to think what it means to call a pastor. Let them be fully convinced that the choice they are making is a wise one. Let them investigate fully the standing and past record of the minister before they give him a call and be fully convinced that they are right.

Many churches are carried away by a strange minister's first sermon, or perchance by his flattery and they immediately give him a call "for they are just sure that he is a good man and will build their church right up." Six months of time will very much change their opinion and they want a new pastor. I am sorry to say it, but I say it unhesitatingly, that our churches have been suffering shamefully from men who should never have been permitted to stand in a Brethren pulpit. They are gone but they left nothing but desolation and consternation in their tracks.

But what will our pastors do that are not able to hold their charges, some will ask. Let all qualify themselves intellectually and spiritually so that they are able to hold the fort and not only to hold it but make it stronger and better.

What are the special advantages of such a system do you ask? 1. It would call into active service the very best talent. 2. It would mean thorough prep-